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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED SENSITIVE CAPTION)

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TAGS: IZ MOPS UN PREL AORC
SUBJECT: UNAMI SECURITY UPDATE

Summary:

¶1. (SBU) DOD, State, and UN representatives met May 21 at the Pentagon to discuss continued USG security support to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Issues discussed included U.S.-UN collocation within the International Zone and at PRT locations, and the UN's desire to follow the U.S. lead in pursuing a lower-profile approach to security with increasing integration of Iraqi Security Forces. Department, DOD, and UN officials agreed to meet again in October, 2009.

End Summary.

Background:

¶2. (SBU) The May 21 meeting was the fourth time DOD, State and UN representatives met to discuss security for UNAMI. At the previous meeting on March 13, 2009 USG representatives briefed UN Under Secretary General (U/SYG) for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe and U/SYG Sir David Veness on the U.S. forces, drawdown schedule and agreed to provide force protection, movement security, and static security to UNAMI in accordance with the U.S.-UN Security Agreement as long as U.S. Forces remained in Iraq.

UN Compound, Middle-Ring Security and Red-Zone Movements:

¶3. (SBU) The UN delegation, led by Veness, began the May 21 meeting by thanking the USG for Multi National Forces Iraq's (MNF-I) continued support of UNAMI. The UN representatives discussed plans for a new, secure UN compound to be located in the International Zone. The current cost estimate is \$100M, to be paid half by Iraqi funds and half by the UN General Fund. UNAMI expects this compound will be operational in 2011. They asked about the compound's benefitting from static security used by the Embassy as it will be adjacent to the New Embassy Compound on al-Kindi Street. Department officials responded that the USG hopes to move checkpoints further down al-Kindi Street to encompass a new USG landing zone (LZ Fernandez), which would have the effect of incorporating the new UN compound as well.

¶4. (SBU) The UN representatives indicated that member states such as Fiji would continue to provide UNAMI's inner ring security but asked if they could continue to rely on MNF-I for middle-ring protection for UNAMI. DOD officials assured them that for as long as U.S. Forces remained in Iraq under the Security Agreement, they could. (Note: The bilateral Security Agreement calls for the withdrawal of all U.S. Forces no later than December 31, 2011. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) Department representatives agreed to share with UNAMI assessments of the constantly developing security situation as Iraq assumes greater control of the International Zone and the USG consolidates its presence there. All agreed that further information exchange between the Embassy RSO and UNAMI security office to share best

practices and lessons learned on conducting red zone moves in armored vehicle convoys without MNF-I escort, and the integration of Iraqi Security Forces into security operations would be useful.

Police Training Issues:

¶ 16. (SBU) The parties also discussed training of Iraqi Police units to provide security to the diplomatic community. DS invited UNAMI to observe the training, but noted that the Embassy does not plan to transition all security to the Iraqis and suggested that the UN might need to look at using contractors to fill security gaps. The UN representatives also noted that they are now working more closely with the Ministry of Interior (MOI), as it takes over security responsibilities from the Ministry of Defense.

¶ 17. (SBU) U/SYG Veness described a recent meeting held in Amman to discuss Iraq security issues with the UN family of agencies. He noted that, as the UN moves more aggressively to address humanitarian issues, it will need to revise its concept of operation. He is awaiting policy guidance from the UN's policy committee.

¶ 18. (SBU) At the UN's request, DOD extended from May 31 to June 30, 2009 the joint DOD-UN assessment of ISF ability to provide security for UNAMI. All parties agreed that the assessment should be done right, not hurried, although the longer it takes the less time there is to act upon its recommendations before U.S. forces withdraw. DOD officials concurred with the UN request that the ISF assessment become a continual/recurring process, vice a one-time assessment.

¶ 19. (SBU) The UN representatives also noted that they are considering ways to offer long-term help with the Iraqi police training mission. DOD and State officials indicated that as the U.S. police training program transitions from DOD to State lead, the UN could be useful in filling gaps.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams:

¶ 10. (SBU) State representatives provided the UN delegation with an overview of the USG intention to reduce the PRTs from 24 today to 16 and eventually to six. The UN officers said that even with an expanding footprint they did not plan to request to station personnel at more PRTs than the six locations they already occupy, although they promised to inform MNF-I of any change in plans. DOD officials reiterated MNF-I's intent to provide the same level of security and support to UNAMI provincial efforts as is done currently. Since the PRTs and UN resources will overlap, MNF-I security for UNAMI will be mostly collateral.

¶ 11. (SBU) State representatives observed that the PRT program is looking at ways to expand its role as a platform for the UN and other international organizations in Iraq. The UN officials noted that there is a lack of understanding about this opportunity within the UN's humanitarian community. The two sides agreed to exchange of information on humanitarian, development, and reconstruction efforts.

UN Request for Air Assets:

¶ 12. (SBU) The UN side expressed interest in access to State helicopters. DS responded that the RSO's resources (24 contracted aircraft) are fully committed to State missions and cannot be dedicated to UNAMI support; however they will continue to fly UNAMI personnel on State helicopter missions if seats are available, an arrangement that has worked well to date. DS did offer to help the UN with threat assessments on proposed introduction of UN air resources (two helicopters) into Iraq, and cooperation in coordinating new State and UN contracts for helicopter maintenance that may provide mutual benefits.

¶ 13. (SBU) DOD officers noted that the Iraqis are not ready to take over their airspace (under 24,000 feet), so the air-traffic control system will continue to be managed by

MNF-I for the foreseeable future. Finally, in response to questions about Embassy use of commercial air transport into Iraq, State officers explained that EmbassyBaghdad has a working group considering the viability of use of commercial air for COM employees through both the civilian and military sides of Baghdad International Airport. They invited the UN to contact this working group to benefit from their work on the issue.

Elections and Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs):

¶14. (SBU) The UN officials noted significant funding challenges for the upcoming KRG and national elections. The UN indicated they do not anticipate a need for US support for the KRG elections, and will create a detailed list for the national elections for MNF-I. The UN will host a mid-June Provincial Elections After Action Review to better prepare for the end-of-year national elections.

¶15. (SBU) The SRSG is expected to brief the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) report to the Iraqi Council of Ministers on June 18 and will push for action by the Article 23 Committee.

The UN delegation expressed concern about increasing Arab-Kurd tensions in Ninewa and asked about contingency planning in case the report causes violence. DOD officials responded that MNF-I is prepared for such a contingency.

607 Agreement:

¶16. (SBU) The UN officials indicated that they have received approval to complete the exchange of notes responding to the US request to extend the 607 agreement for an additional year through 2011. The U.S. side agreed to look into whether Level I medical support should be added to the 607 agreement should local arrangements prove inadequate for UN needs.

Roundtable:

¶17. (SBU) The UN officers indicated that the US MILADs were critical to UNAMIs success and that they had requested two additional MILADs. (Note: State received the request and forwarded it to DOD). DOD officials promised to forward a recommendation for approval to the Department of the Army.

¶18. (SBU) UN officials also indicated that Iraq has expressed an interest in contributing troops to UN Peacekeeping Operations. They indicated they would proceed cautiously on the Iraqi offer, suggesting several methods of participation more in line with Iraqi capabilities and ability to sustain deployed forces. DOD officials welcomed this as an indication of Iraqi desire to re integrate into the "community of nations."

¶19. (SBU) Department and DOD officials agreed to meet again with the UN in October, 2009.

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